



JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release:

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

DOYLE RELEASES HOMELESS REPORT

*County Funds 'Family Stabilization Program' to
Prevent Homelessness -- \$1.1 million in 2001*

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today released Monroe County's annual Homeless Report and announced Department of Social Services (DSS) funding for the Family Stabilization Program in 2001. Overall, homeless numbers from 1999 to 2000 rose by 740 cases, or approximately 13%. Dispelling a common myth, chronic homelessness accounted for only 2% of the homeless last year, with the remaining 98% in transition.

"While homelessness remains a problem that must be dealt with, this report dispells some common misconceptions," said Doyle. "Clearly, there are individuals and families that are experiencing some difficult times, however, most of these cases are in a transition period and are being aggressively assisted by Monroe County."

Chronic homelessness is what many individuals think of when defining the homeless population. The chronically homeless are those individuals who do not seek assistance from DSS and live "on the streets." On a monthly basis, County DSS caseworkers, law enforcement and private sector personnel reach out to the chronically homeless in efforts to provide them with shelter and other services. This outreach occurs in the old subway beds, downtown parking garages and other areas where this population has been known to seek shelter.

Even with this aggressive outreach effort, the report shows the chronically homeless population as one that resists assistance and remains "on the street."

The much larger population of individuals classified as homeless are in a period of transition. These individuals may have been evicted from an apartment, are the victim of domestic violence, had their dwelling condemned for code violations or were recently released from an institution (jail/prison, hospital/substance abuse facility).

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In a proactive measure designed to prevent transitional homelessness among families, Monroe County DSS is funding the Family Stabilization Program in partnership with the Salvation Army. In 2001, this program will receive \$1.1 million from New York State to prevent homelessness by assisting families in need. In 2001, this additional funding will bring the county's total payment to homeless service providers to more than \$8.5 million.

As its basic tenant, the Family Stabilization Program recognizes that a percentage of families within Monroe County may require some short-term assistance to remain in their homes and self-sufficient. County DSS and the Salvation Army will work to directly assist these families and to prevent them from becoming homeless.

While the Family Stabilization Program is designed to prevent families from becoming homeless in the first place, the Homeless Report showed that existing county and private services effectively serve the needs of the 98% of homeless that are in transition categories.

Typically, individuals or families experiencing transitional homelessness are found immediate temporary shelter and their situation is managed by DSS caseworkers and housing specialists.

Once an individual or family seeks assistance, directly through DSS or from a local shelter, their situation is assessed and, using their specific circumstance, a plan is established to assist them. The caseworker and housing specialist then work to implement this tailor-made plan by moving the transitionally homeless from their temporary housing to a permanent home.

Temporary housing in Monroe County may consist of a bed in a local shelter (predominantly for single men and women with some family placements), a temporary DSS leased house (for larger families) or a local hotel room (for smaller families and the difficult to place). Unlike most New York Counties, Monroe County DSS caseworkers and housing specialists work with the transitionally homeless on-site until they are found permanent housing. As a policy, families are kept together in temporary shelter.

The report also shows that Monroe County DSS has maintained a short "length of stay" in their temporary housing outlets for the transitionally homeless. For single men and women, the length of stay has remained less than 10 days since 1996. Families placed in hotels have a length of stay of less than 9 days before being placed in permanent housing and families in shelters typically are in transition for 11 days. The harder to place, larger families in temporary leased housing averaged an approximate one-month stay prior to placement in permanent housing.

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No one seeking assistance is turned away and County DSS, working with local shelters and other service providers, currently has adequate resources to meet the needs of the homeless population. In 2000, DSS provided emergency/temporary housing to 6,477 families and individuals compared to 5,737 in 1999.

“In Monroe County we remain committed to providing the resources necessary to assist those in need,” said County Executive Doyle. “Part of the answer in addressing the issue of homelessness is understanding who is in need and why and this report gives us that necessary information.”

Using New York State reporting definitions, the county’s homeless population was characterized by cause of homelessness as follows:

Cause of Homelessness	% of Homeless Pop.
Eviction by Primary Tenant ¹	46%
Released from Institution ²	23%
Evicted by Landlord	10%
Domestic Violence Victim	9%
Property Code Violations	4%
Arrived from Out of County	4%
Fire	2%
<i>Transient/Chronic Homeless</i> ³	2%

¹The **Eviction by Primary Tenant** category accounts for nearly half of the homeless population in Monroe County. This population is comprised of individuals or families who had been residing in the homes of relatives or friends and are asked to leave.

²Many individuals in the **Released from Institution** category have received substance abuse treatment and cannot return to their previous home in order to avoid relapse. This category also includes those released from jail/prison who may not be able to return to their previous dwelling as a condition of probation/parole.

³**Transient/Chronic Homeless** is the only non-transitional category.

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